

The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

Executive Registry

78-1026

17 April 1978

Mr. Donald Kirk  
THE LOS ANGELES TIMES  
Times Mirror Square  
Los Angeles, California 90053

Dear Mr. Kirk:

I've just read your column, "CIA and the Press: New Policy is No Policy," in the March 15th Los Angeles Times. I'm sorry that you rushed to some conclusions that I believe cannot be supported in fact.

For instance you say, "Can anyone be so naive as to think that the CIA would not employ such subterfuge so long as it does not risk full exposure?" I assure you that there is no way in which I am going to say we are doing one thing and proceed to do another. Beyond that, any action we take today is subject to full scrutiny of an Intelligence Oversight Board appointed by the President and two Select Committees of the Congress. Thus it is quite incorrect to surmise that were we to violate our own rule about newsmen we would not be risking full exposure. We indeed would.

You indicate that the regulations I published last December are not credible because they don't forbid a relationship with free-lance journalists. May I invite your attention to the fact that I published an article in Foreign Affairs in January of 1977, and I'm presently drafting some other material to be published in like journals. If you would extend the definition, as I gather you prefer, I could not continue to hold my present assignment. I really don't think there is much connection between my past article on "Naval Balance" or a forthcoming article on the problems of maintaining secrecy in a democratic society that could be injurious to the American public just because I also happen to work for the CIA.

You oppose our using foreign journalists. I'm not sure that you really feel it important to preserve the editorial integrity of the

large number of media organs around the world that are totally controlled by dictatorial regimes. Nor is there any great danger to the American public in such an association by us, since any of us would be foolhardy to believe that these organs always printed the truth. Yet, for the very reasons you adduce in your article about the knowledgeability of media people through their many contacts, foreign media people can be of great value to our intelligence activities.

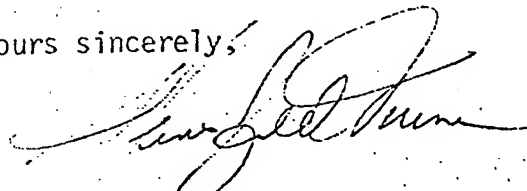
I resent your comment labeling our analysts as "unimaginative second-raters working for the CIA." Let me tell you that in the past year we gave over 165 briefings to American media personnel in our Headquarters at Langley. Many of them came back many times. Apparently you are in a minority in your profession in feeling that we are second rate in the analytic department. Our analytic department which has these exchanges with media people is not an undercover, hidden activity. I would be most happy to have you sit down with our analysts from any area of the world on any topic and let them joust with you intellectually.

You accuse us of hypocrisy in setting guidelines that we can easily flout. I pointed out earlier that there is a great risk in any violation of our guidelines. Beyond that, let me point out that a few months ago I had an appeal from the American Translators Association. There were a number of part-time media people working for the CIA translating unclassified radio broadcasts that we intercept. We had fired them all as a result of our directive on relations with American media. The Translators Association appealed this unbending application of a regulation intended for quite a different purpose. I did find the modicum of flexibility on our regulations important in letting me correct that unfortunate situation.

Finally, you complain that we will not disclose the names of our former media associates. Let me only say that we are honorable people. When we look back on a contractual relationship which we have had in the past and which calls for privacy of that relationship, we feel we would be dishonoring our contract if we were now to disclose these people's names.

Let me encourage you when you are next in Washington to come talk to us about this. I hope you will because I sincerely believe your apprehensions are unfounded.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stansfield Turner". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

STANSFIELD TURNER